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17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS): A citizens committee from the Bassett Unified School District felt that a child's individual capacities should be developed and his sense of individual responsibility should be fostered. Since many criticisms of education were related to difficulties organizational in nature, the committee investigated school organizations designed specifically to meet individual differences. The committee adopted the rationale of the continuous development school, which states that learning is an individual matter and that it suffers when external agencies impose restrictions upon the learning processes. The program eliminates such artificial barriers as grade levels and time schedules that interfere with maximum learning. This is accomplished through an individual approach to education in which the major responsibility for learning is with the student. The Bassett High School is planned to meet these goals. The core of the school is the instructional materials center. Immediately adjacent to this center are the study units; each unit contains studio offices and a large area made up of individual study stations called carrels. Assignment to each unit is on the basis of one professional teacher and one teacher aide for every 60 students. Each child participates in a testing program and develops certain semester or year objectives. He is provided with a program that is a prepared sequence of activities to assist him in reaching these objectives. The home base of the student is his carrel. Each day the student fills out a card indicating his progress in his program and whether or not help is needed. The program involves a systems approach to education in that it analyzes the essential concepts relative to a specified educational goal and then provides those experiences which are appropriate to the development of the concepts.							
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INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY - U.S.C.
THE BASSETT CONTINUOUS PROGRESS HIGH SCHOOL

By Edward Eisman

Info System

Something has been brewing in Bassett! This something is, quite frankly, an experiment to see whether or not a school district can offer a twentieth century educational program in the twentieth century. This does not seem to ask so much; let's see what is involved.

If there is one thing that is universally accepted regarding American public education, it is the fact that it has been universally criticized. This criticism started in the dame school days and continues up to this present day. This criticism has at times been constructive; at other times has been ill founded and malicious but it has been one of the forces that has propelled our system of free and public education to its position of world leadership.

We have accomplished so much and yet we are still criticized both within the profession and among the community that we serve. We will probably continue to be criticized until each individual is educated up to his capacity - an impossible task. Well, what do we do?

The Bassett Unified School District, under the leadership of Superintendent James C. Ketcherside, decided to go to the source and find out what the community wanted in its schools. A citizens committee was formed and asked to provide a list of desirable educational objectives that they would like to see incorporated into the Bassett High School. This group met with Assistant Superintendent Dr. Robert E. Walker and after a good deal of soul searching, came up with a list of educational objectives.

Although the list of objectives was lengthy, there were two threads that ran throughout; these parents wanted their children educated up to their individual capacities and also they felt that the school should be concerned with developing in each child a sense of individual responsibility.

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Recognizing that these goals were sound educationally, the district administration sought an organizational framework that would best realize these goals. It was here that the difficulty arose.

The district administration was faced with two alternatives. In formulating the plans for the new high school they could concentrate on either "devices" or "organization." In other words, they could build a conventional school and try to utilize those aids (devices) that would contribute to the development of individual capacities, or they could seek to reach these goals through the use of a different organizational pattern.

Referring back to the criticisms of education from both the profession and lay public, it was felt that many of the difficulties were organizational in nature. It was felt that regardless of what methods were used or what aids were provided, there are certain restrictions that are inherent in the conventional educational framework. Therefore, it was decided that the district would investigate school organizations that were designed specifically to meet individual differences and then incorporate into the organization those technological developments that were relevant.

With this in mind, the Bassett District contacted the School Planning Laboratory at Stanford University and requested that they work with the District in developing a high school program. An agreement was reached whereby the Bassett District would invest \$5,000 and School Planning Laboratory would secure \$8,500 from the Educational Facilities Lab. (a branch of the Ford Foundation) to jointly approach this problem.¹

A professional committee was formed involving the Bassett Board of Trustees; Superintendent Ketcherside and his administrative staff; representatives from Schoolhouse Planning (a branch of the State Department of Education); representatives from Flewelling, Moody and Korne, the architects serving the

District; and representatives from School Planning Lab.

This committee investigated various school programs and contacted a number of people who had worked in the area of school development. Recognizing that all these programs had something to contribute, but also feeling that none of them individualized the curriculum to the desired degree, the committee eventually came in contact with the work of Dr. Edwin A. Read of Brigham Young University.

Dr. Read has developed what he calls "The Continuous Progress School" (research indicates that the term has been used in reference to other programs) and its principles have been applied in the fields of Math and English in the Laboratory School at Brigham Young University for the past three years.

The rationale behind the Continuous Progress School is that learning is an individual matter and that it suffers when external agencies impose restrictions upon the learning processes. To apply this theory to schools, we can see that we place many impediments in the way of learning. Such things as grade levels, time schedules, etc., are all artificialities that we have been utilizing for convenience sake but have no value in themselves.

Basically, the program attempts to break down the artificial barriers that interfere with maximum learning. This is done through an individualized approach to education in which the major responsibility for learning is with the student.

A schematic drawing of the proposed Bassett High School (scheduled to open in 1964) may help explain the program.

(Note to editor: Insert schematic drawing here.)

The core of the plant is the Instructional Materials Center. Immediately adjacent to the Instructional Materials Center are the study units; each unit containing studio offices and a large area made up of individual study stations (carrels). Assignment to each unit will be on the basis of one professional teacher and one paraprofessional (teacher aide) for every sixty students; and so, each unit will house three hundred students. Peripheral to the I.M.C. and study units (not shown in the drawing) will be provision for those activities that will not lend themselves readily to individualized instruction (band, physical education, industrial arts, etc.).

The student will proceed as follows:

Each child will have participated in an extensive testing program and will have developed certain semester or year objectives (i.e., in a twenty week period of time he expects to complete Algebra II, Spanish I, World Literature, etc.). He will be provided a program (i.e., a prepared sequence of activities) to assist him in reaching these objectives. Incorporated into the program will be utilization of auto-instructional materials, programmed textbooks, study kits, books, audio-visual aids and a variety of technological teaching devices.

The home base of the student will be his carrel (individual study station). In the carrel will be a work area including provision for a television receiver and the facilities for scheduling or dialing video tape lectures and demonstrations. It will also include an electronic communication system whereby the student can communicate with the paraprofessional or master teacher and vice versa.

Each day the student will fill out a brief card indicating his progress in his program and also whether or not help is needed before he can continue. The paraprofessional will group these cards on the basis of common needs and give them to the master teacher. The master teacher will then meet

with the students who need help, either individually or in small groups.

The student will work on his program in his carrel. When he reaches a point where he needs additional help, he will inform the paraprofessional who will try to afford immediate assistance. If, in the judgement of the student and paraprofessional still more clarification is desirable, arrangements are made for the student to confer with the master teacher.

The program will involve a systems approach to education in that it will have analyzed the essential concepts relative to a specified educational goal and then will provide those experiences which are appropriate to the development of these concepts. Where the printed word is appropriate, it will be used; where audio or visual experiences are desirable, they will be available; where manipulative experiences are called for, they will be incorporated into the program. (Where group interaction or teacher involvement is desired, they too, will be integrated into the program.) In other words, the learner will be interacting with an entire instructional system involving a wide range of media, and the rate at which he interacts or the degree to which he interacts will be primarily up to the individual student.

Limitation of space prevents further exposition at this time, although I am sure that at best I have only whetted the reader's interest. I would like to close with a quotation and have two in front of me. One is attributed to Simon Ramo: "Don't be ashamed to propose a ridiculous idea. Though worthless today, in ten years it may be of no value whatsoever."² The other is Jim Finn's quote of Herbert Muller in which he says that we must look forward to the future and not present, "... the curious spectacle of civilized man forever marching with his face turned backward - as no doubt the cave man looked back to the good old days when men were free to roam instead of being stuck in a d__hole in the ground".³

We feel that Muller's point is most appropriate to the Bassett Continuous Progress School and suggest that we are "looking toward the future". The reader is invited to his choice of quotations, with history of course, being the final judge.

1. Williams, Robert G. "The Bassett High School - A New Frontier in Secondary Education" May 1962 (Unpublished paper).
2. Rame, Simon "A New Technique of Education", Engineering and Science Monthly October 1957
3. Finn, James D. "Technology and the Instructional Process" Audio Visual Communication Review, Winter 1960